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INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA AND SADC'S SECURITY ORGAN

(U) CLASSIFIED BY POLCOUNS MDRAGSDALE, REASONS 1.5(B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE AND FOREIGN MINISTERS WILL TAKE PART IN AN OCTOBER 26 - 27 SPECIAL MINISTERIAL SESSION IN SWAZILAND ON REFORM OF THE ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENSE, AND SECURITY (THE ORGAN). PARTICIPATION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER SHOULD ADDRESS SAG CONCERN THAT ANY DECISIONS MADE ON THE ISSUE HAVE THE BLESSING OF THE SADC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. THE MINISTERIAL FOLLOWS ON THE HEELS OF A SUCCESSFUL WORKING SESSION IN PRETORIA THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 27 - OCTOBER 1 ORGANIZED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN, ZIMBABWEAN, AND SWAZI MINISTERS OF DEFENSE. THE MOST SUCCESSFUL ELEMENT OF THE WORKING SESSION WAS ZIMBABWEAN COMPREHENSION (FINALLY) OF THE SAG'S POSITION THAT THE ORGAN MUST BE INTEGRATED INTO THE OVERALL SADC STRUCTURE. STRESSING THAT SADC MEMBERS SOMETIMES VIEW SWAZILAND AS A SOUTH AFRICAN "SATELLITE," THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR SADC POLITICAL AFFAIRS TOLD POLOFF ON OCTOBER 7 THAT ANY DECISION ON ORGAN REFORM NEEDED TO APPEAR TO BE A WIDER INITIATIVE THAN THAT OF SOUTH AFRICA, ZIMBABWE, AND SWAZILAND. ALTHOUGH THE SAG REMAINS WORRIED THAT ZIMBABWE WILL IN THE END BALK AT FULL ORGAN-SADC INTEGRATION, SOUTH AFRICA IS NONETHELESS GOING TO SWAZILAND WITH THE HOPE THAT THE SPECIAL MINISTERIAL WILL RESULT IN SADC ENDORSEMENT FOR ORGAN REFORM. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND ON SADC AND THE SECURITY ORGAN

¶2. (C) BEFORE SADC CAN ADDRESS REGIONAL SECURITY ISSUES IN AN ORGANIZED FASHION, MEMBER STATES MUST FIRST AGREE ON SADC'S ROLE WITH REGARD TO POLITICAL, DEFENSE, AND SECURITY ISSUES. FOR THAT TO TAKE PLACE, THE STATUS OF SADC'S ORGAN, (AS WELL AS THE INTERSTATE DEFENSE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE (ISDSC)) MUST BE CLEARLY DEFINED. ALTHOUGH MEMBER STATES ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF THE ORGAN DURING THE SADC HEADS OF STATE SUMMIT IN MASERU IN 1996, THE ORGAN IS MAINTAINED SEPARATELY AT THE HEADS OF STATE LEVEL. ITS CHAIR, ZIMBABWEAN PRESIDENT MUGABE, VIEWS THE ORGAN AS A PARALLEL AND EQUAL BODY NEITHER DIRECTLY LINKED NOR ACCOUNTABLE TO SADC OR THE ISDSC. HOWEVER, UNLIKE SADC, NEITHER THE ORGAN NOR THE ISDSC (WHICH IS CHAIRED BY SWAZILAND) POSSESS SECRETARIATS, WHICH HAS LIMITED BOTH BODIES' POTENTIAL SCOPE OF ACTION.

¶3. (C) ALTHOUGH THE ORGAN CHAIRMANSHIP IS ONLY A ONE-YEAR TERM, SUCCESSION HAS BEEN HELD UP OVER DIFFERENCES ABOUT ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SADC. PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SADC'S PREVIOUS CHAIR, FORMER SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT MANDELA AND MUGABE, DISCUSSION ON THE ORGAN'S STRUCTURE HAS BEEN CONTINUALLY SIDELINED. ALTHOUGH SADC TASKED A WORKING GROUP, COMPRISED OF MOZAMBIQUE, MALAWI, AND NAMIBIA, IN EARLY 1998 TO STUDY THE ISSUE, NEITHER THE ISSUE NOR THE GROUP'S RECOMMENDATION WERE EVEN ADDRESSED AT THE 1998 SADC SUMMIT IN MAURITIUS. HOWEVER, DURING THE 1999 SUMMIT IN MAPUTO (WHERE SOUTH AFRICA PASSED ON THE SADC CHAIRMANSHIP TO MOZAMBIQUE AND THEREBY REMOVED THE PERSONAL TENSION BETWEEN MANDELA AND MUGABE FROM THE EQUATION), DISCUSSION WAS RE-OPENED AND A COMMITMENT WAS MADE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE, RESULTING IN THIS RECENT ROUND OF SOUTH AFRICAN, ZIMBABWEAN, AND SWAZI MEETINGS.

FROM MINISTERS TO WORKING GROUP

¶4. (C) IN AN OCTOBER 7 MEETING, DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS' (DFA) DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR SADC POLITICAL AFFAIRS

HORST BRAMMER TOLD POLOFF THAT HE HAD BEEN UNEXPECTEDLY (HE WAS SCHEDULED FOR ANNUAL LEAVE) DRAFTED THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 27 - OCTOBER 1 TO MEET WITH ZIMBABWEAN AND SWAZI COUNTERPARTS ON THE ISSUE OF REFORM OF THE ORGAN FOR POLITICS, DEFENSE, AND SECURITY. THE WEEK-LONG "BRAINSTORMING" SESSION CONSISTED OF 2-PERSON DELEGATIONS (ONE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL AND ONE DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIAL) FROM EACH OF THE THREE COUNTRIES. ACCORDING TO BRAMMER, THIS UNEXPECTED WORKING SESSION CAME ABOUT AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN, ZIMBABWEAN, AND SWAZI DEFENSE MINISTERS' MEETINGS IN PRETORIA THE WEEK BEFORE (THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 21). ALTHOUGH BRAMMER WELCOMED THE INITIATIVE AND NOTED THAT INITIAL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON NEXT STEPS, HE NONETHELESS WORRIED THAT THE DEFENSE MINISTERS WERE CIRCUMVENTING THE SADC STRUCTURE IN THEIR QUEST FOR RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE.

15. (C) AS BRAMMER EXPLAINED, PERMITTING MINISTERS OF DEFENSE TO DECIDE ON SADC ISSUES WITHOUT FIRST COORDINATING WITH THE SADC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS CREATED A "PROBLEM OF PRINCIPLES." CITING THE EXAMPLES OF SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTION IN LESOTHO AND ZIMBABWEAN, ANGOLAN, AND NAMIBIAN INTERVENTION IN THE DROC (NOMINALLY IN SADC'S NAME), BRAMMER STRESSED THAT ALLOWING THE MINISTERS OF DEFENSE TO "SOLVE" THE ORGAN PROBLEM ADDED TO THE OVERALL WEAKENING OF SADC LEGITIMACY. THEREFORE, BRAMMER EMPHASIZED THAT THE SAG WOULD INSIST THAT ANY FOLLOW-ON MEETINGS BE INCLUSIVE AND ANY MINISTERIALS ADDRESSING THE ISSUE INCLUDE FOREIGN MINISTERS. (COMMENT. IN AN OCTOBER 21 CONVERSATION, BRAMMER APPEARED SATISFIED THAT THE OCTOBER 26 - 27 MINISTERIAL WILL MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS. END COMMENT.)

ZIMBABWE SEES THE LIGHT
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16. (C) WITH GREAT RELIEF, BRAMMER NOTED THAT HARARE HAS FINALLY BEGUN TO "UNDERSTAND" THE SOUTH AFRICA POSITION ON THE ORGAN ISSUE. LAMENTING THE FACT THAT ZIMBABWE HAD PERMITTED THE ORGAN ISSUE TO BECOME A PERSONAL ONE (ON THE SIDE OF PRESIDENT MUGABE), BRAMMER STRESSED THAT THE SAG HAS FINALLY BEEN ABLE TO CONVINCE AT LEAST THE ZIMBABWEAN DEFENSE MINISTER THAT SOUTH AFRICA DID NOT WANT TO TAKE OVER THE ORGAN, ONLY ENSURE ITS INTEGRATION INTO THE OVERALL SADC STRUCTURE. ACCORDING TO BRAMMER, THE ZIMBABWEANS NOW HAVE A CLEARER IDEA AS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGAN INTEGRATION. RECALLING THAT THE SAG HAD USED THREE KEY POINTS TO CONVINCE THE ZIMBABWEANS OF THIS, BRAMMER INDICATED THAT THE ZIMBABWEANS FOUND THE KEY POINT OF INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION THE MOST COMPELLING (COMMENT. THE SAG HAS STRESSED REPEATEDLY THAT THE ORGAN MUST BE PART OF SADC OR ELSE IT WOULD NOT QUALIFY AS AN ACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL MANDATES, SUCH AS UN CHAPTER 6 OR 7 ACTION. END COMMENT.)

17. (C) BRAMMER ADDED THAT ONE OF THE SAG'S OTHER TWO POINTS HAD BEEN THAT SOUTHERN AFRICAN POLITICAL ISSUES ARE INTRICATELY TIED TO SADC ECONOMIC ONES (I.E., RESOURCE CONFLICT CAUSES POLITICAL INSTABILITY), SO THE ORGAN SHOULD BE TIED TO SADC FORMALLY. LASTLY, THE SAG HAD FOCUSED ATTENTION ON ZIMBABWE'S POCKETS, NOTING THAT THE COST OF REPLICATING INSTITUTIONS (I.E., A SECRETARIAT FOR BOTH THE ORGAN AND SADC) WOULD BE A WASTE OF ALREADY SCARCE MONETARY RESOURCES. IN THE END, ACCORDING TO BRAMMER, THE ZIMBABWEANS AT THE WEEK-LONG CONFERENCE (AND IMPLICITLY THE ZIMBABWEAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE) ACCEPTED ALL THREE ARGUMENTS, WHICH SOMEWHAT SURPRISED, BUT CERTAINLY PLEASED, THE SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION.

BUT WILL ZIMBABWE PLAY BALL?
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18. (C) ON THE OTHER HAND, BRAMMER TOLD POLOFF THAT EVEN DAYS AFTER THIS SUCCESSFUL WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING, REPORTS FROM HARARE INDICATED THAT MUGABE WAS BALKING AT LENDING FURTHER SUPPORT TO THE DEFENSE MINISTERS' SCHEME. EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER ZIMBABWE'S COMMITMENT TO REFORM,

BRAMMER COMPLAINED THAT NOT ONLY ZIMBABWE, BUT INCREASINGLY NAMIBIA TOO CONTINUED TO TRY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR INDEPENDENCE FROM SOUTH AFRICA. (COMMENT. BRAMMER ACCOUNTED FOR NAMIBIA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ZIMBABWE-ANGOLA-NAMIBIA DEFENSE PACT AS JUST THAT - WINDHOEK'S SHOW OF INDEPENDENCE. DFA SENTIMENT IS THAT NAMIBIA HAS THE RIGHT IDEA, BUT SEEMS TO ALWAYS DEMONSTRATE IT THE WRONG WAY. END COMMENT.) ACCORDING TO BRAMMER, ZIMBABWE WILL CONTINUE TO APPROACH THE ISSUE THROUGH BILATERAL DIALOGUE (I.E., LEADER TO LEADER), UNTIL AGREEMENT IS REACHED, AND ONLY THEN COMMIT TO LARGER INITIATIVES (I.E., SADC REFORM OF THE ORGAN). BRAMMER STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE MAJORITY OF SADC STATES SUPPORT THE ORGAN'S INTEGRATION INTO SADC (FOR WHICH THE SAG IS KEENLY LOBBYING), IN THE END, ZIMBABWE WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO AGREE

COMMENT
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19. (C) FOREIGN MINISTER ZUMA WILL ARRIVE IN SWAZILAND WELL-BRIEFED ON THE ORGAN ISSUE (DFA OFFICIALS BRIEFED HER OVER A THREE-DAY PERIOD IN CAPE TOWN EARLIER THIS WEEK). THE SAG, AWARE THAT MUCH OF MUGABE'S APPARENT COOPERATION ON THE ISSUE IS DUE TO HIS CURRENT "RAPPROCHEMENT" WITH MBEKI, WILL TRY TO CAPITALIZE ON IT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, AND TRY FOR CONCRETE COMMITMENTS AT THE MINISTERIAL. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SAG WILL SEEK TO ENSURE AT THE MINISTERIAL THAT ORGAN REFORM BECOMES AN INCLUSIVE PROJECT AND NOT A DEAL STRUCK BY A FEW IN THE BACK ROOM FOR MANY. END COMMENT.

JOSEPH